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THE LEGEND OF THE HOLY GRAIL.

III.

THE examination of stories belonging to the cycle may be continued by some account of French romances, in which, as in the incomplete poem of Crestien, Perceval is made the hero of the narration.

CONTINUATORS OF CRESTIEN.

Several long poetical compositions are preserved, in which courtly poets undertook to complete Crestien's unfinished tale. There seems to me no reason to believe that any of these makers of verse possessed information regarding the history other than the suggestions offered by their original. For their matter they depended on commonplaces of the romantic poetry of their time, eked out by an abundant exercise of individual ingenuity, each successive writer freely utilizing, embroidering, and recombining the situations depicted by his predecessors.

In the printed edition, these supplements were united with Crestien's poem in such manner as apparently to form a homogeneous work, and reproduced in an uncritical text abounding with interpolations and confusions.

(1.) *First continuator.* Crestien left incomplete adventures relating to Gawain (to use English spelling); an anonymous romancer carried on the doings of this hero. His work, devoid of psychological interest, moves on the usual level of fiction devoted to knightly exploits; the production, however, possesses some interest from the consideration that the author made use of certain tales already familiar in Arthurian fiction, and that the outlines of his plots, in these cases, seem not so completely recast by free imagination as is usual with writings of this cycle.

Among these stories may be mentioned the concluding episode (lines 20,843-21,916) relating to Carahes (the Gaherys of Malory), a brother of Gawain. While Arthur is holding court at Carlisle a boat appears, drawn by a swan, and containing the body of a slain knight, the lance-head still inserted in the wound; a letter requests that the burial may be postponed for a year, in order that opportunity may be given for the extraction of the fragment; the knight who succeeds in this essay will be under obligation to avenge the blood of the deceased. Carahes touches the weapon, which of itself falls into his hand, and consequently feels himself bound to set off as knight errant in quest of an enemy of whose name and residence he is ignorant. At this time the hero is pledged to return to a certain garden, where he had been vanquished by a dwarf, who has

bound him to reappear at the end of a year ; he fulfils the engagement, this time vanquishes the dwarf, and also subsequently jousts with the dwarf's master, using the spear-head mentioned ; in the encounter the adversary of Carahes is struck down with a wound of the same character as that which he himself had inflicted on the knight of the swan-boat, this antagonist being that very murderer of whom Carahes is in search. A damsel who happens to be present recognizes the lance-head as formerly the property of her own lover, the unfortunate swan-knight ; this personage is named as Brangemor, son of Brangepart, the (fairy) queen of a solitary isle, and of her mortal lover, Guingamor (a name variously spelled) ; the poet speaks of the tale of Guingamor as famous in his day. Of this lay a version has survived ("Romania," vol. viii. 1879, p. 50) ; the extant tale is apparently a variant of that known to the continuator, and does not contain the name of the fairy mistress. The story, of the Rip Van Winkle type, relates to the experience of a knight who has been resident in a fairy palace for three days, as he supposes, but in reality for three hundred years ; such a history has been related in numerous European forms, and in all probability was familiar throughout Europe, in many variations, at the time of the continuator. A later writer, author of the prologue to be mentioned, seems to have known a different or modified version of the tale of the swan-boat, seeing that he places the scene at Glamorgan ; he regards the fiction as a "branch" of the Grail history.

In spite of the remotely mythical character which belongs to certain incidents of the account, this fantastic narrative bears obvious marks of recent elaboration, and cannot, as seems to me, be regarded otherwise than as the composition of French romancers contemporary with the continuator, and as the product of their unbridled fancy, which, after the time of Crestien, overflowed all limits. The idea of the swan-bark may probably have been borrowed from a French tale, then well known, but which has been preserved only in later forms, *The Chevalier au Cygne*. The traditional element of the adventure seems to have consisted in a popular belief, of which traces elsewhere appear, that the weapon which has been instrumental in causing a death ought to be preserved, probably on account of the superstitious belief that it would be found potent in the vengeance. The figure of the dwarf (originally a demonic power), who requires a knight whom he has encountered to meet him a second time at the expiration of a year, was a genuine element of popular fiction, but is here introduced from other tales (one such narrative recited by the continuator himself) and has undergone a recast which obscures primary significance.

A section of this continuation (lines 19,637-20,375) deals with the

Legend of the Grail, and makes Gawain arrive at the castle of the Roi Pescéour, or Fisher King, just as in the poem of Crestien Perceval had done. While King Arthur and his court are encamped in the forest, an armed knight passes, who fails to accost the queen (the idea is borrowed from Crestien's Erec). The seneschal Kex (Kay) having failed in an attempt to bring in the knight, that task is intrusted to Gawain, whom the stranger voluntarily follows (the model is the narration of Crestien's Perceval). The knight, while thus under the protection of Arthur's nephew, is shot by an arrow directed by an invisible hand (it is hinted that Kex is the author of the misdeed); before leaving the world, the knight makes a last request, that Gawain shall don his armor and ride his steed, in order to fulfil a task, respecting which he supplies no additional information. Accordingly, Gawain pursues his way, riding he knows not whither, and on his route passes a chapel, in which a light is extinguished by a black hand. (It afterwards appears that this extinction is an emblem of the death of one of the race of the Fisher; the poet declines to explain the occurrence, remarking that it is characteristic of the Grail that the story must be related only as "it ought to go," line 19,940). The hero rides all night and all the following day (through Normandy and Brittany, says the text, doubtless corrupt; the scene is laid on the marches of Britain). At last he reaches the sea, and enters an avenue overarched by boughs (the notion is copied after the journey of Yvain in Crestien's *Chevalier au Lion*); he proceeds in this direction until midnight. At last he reaches a hall full of people, who on account of his costume at first take him for their master, but perceive their error when he is disarmed. Those present quit the hall; bearers enter, carrying a bier on which is laid the body of a knight, upon whose breast lies the fragment of a sword; clergy follow in procession (the account is modelled after the funeral scene in Crestien's poem relating to Yvain). The company depart, leaving behind the bier; Gawain sees a crowned knight, who calls for water, and a banquet is served; in place of seneschal and butler, the rich Grail in many courses performs the service, supplying the tables with food and wine; when the king commands the board to be removed, the supper vanishes. Gawain, left to himself, sees only the bier and a lance, from which drips blood, flowing through a golden tube into a silver cup. The king reappears, carrying the sword brought by Gawain, which is only the other half of that resting on the body of the knight drawn by the swan. (It is now perceived that the knight whose armor Gawain had donned was bound on an errand of vengeance; according to the idea of the vengeful weapon already noted, the person to be avenged being the lord now about to be

interred, who had been slain with the sword broken in the stroke, carried by the avenger of blood, and from him taken by Gawain.) The king requires his guest to reunite the pieces of the sword, declaring that under no other condition will he be able to succeed in his task. Gawain makes inquiry about the lance, and is informed that it is that with which the Son of God had been wounded in the side, and which will bleed until the Day of Judgment. As the latter stroke had caused inestimable gain, so another blow (that by which the nameless lord had been slain) has brought about terrible loss, seeing that thereby the kingdom of Logres (*i. e.* Loegria, England) and the whole country had been destroyed. While listening, Gawain falls asleep, and at morn finds himself by the seashore, his horse and arms at his side. He sees the country (which, as it seems, has been in a waste and waterless condition, although nothing has been definitely said to that effect) restored to verdure and freshness as a result of the questions he has asked; the folk whom he encounters bless him for such result, but blame him for not making inquiry with regard to the Grail, a procedure which would have caused them unspeakable satisfaction. He promises himself that, if another opportunity offers, he will be less neglectful, and will inquire as to the mystery (*le secré et tout le service*, 20,333). He resolves to make up for his failure by accomplishing other feats of arms before returning to Britain (the borderlands of adventure in which these occurrences are supposed to take place, though within the island, are not included under that title).

The suggestions on which this narration is founded are furnished by Crestien, who makes Perceval receive from his cousin, the Fisher King, a sword which is to break at the first blow; this weapon is used by Perceval, and actually is shattered, but the pieces are sought and obtained by the Fisher. It has also been stated that the sword may be reunited only by a certain Trebucet, resident at an unnamed lake, and that, after such welding, it will be a trustworthy weapon. The continuator, finding the enigmatical weapon thus in possession of the lord of the Grail, thought that he could make good use of the situation, making ability to join the pieces a necessary part of the credentials of the hero who comes to inquire about the sacred vessel. But, in order to utilize the suggestion, he is obliged altogether to contradict Crestien's representations. There could hardly be a more definite indication that the continuator had no independent information about the story, and that his source, so far as regards a story of the Grail, was solely the incomplete romance of Crestien, complemented by a liberal exercise of imagination. As usual in such cases, the intelligence of the writer was unable to prevent lapse into utter inconsequence;

instead of proceeding to describe the manner in which Arthur's nephew proceeds on his duty of blood vengeance, he turns to another episode, avoiding particulars as to the name and rank of two slain knights, no doubt for the best of reasons, namely, because he had himself no definite idea, and did not find his power of invention sufficiently brilliant to carry him through so difficult a task.

Equal indifference to the intentions of his predecessor is shown in the continuator's treatment of the Grail. In Crestien this is simply a dish used for the purpose of conveying food to an unseen person, of religious profession, who is able to exist on the sacred host, the bread of angels. The continuator has altogether forgotten the invisible occupant of the adjoining chamber, whose comfort had been the sole reason for the introduction of a dish; in his tale the vessel now appears in the character of a miraculous producer of food. The dish has become a talisman, its title *Graal* being not a common but a proper name; it has a mystic character, and the tale relating to it is so sacred that it must be communicated with caution. As the lance is connected with Christian history, and as an account of the Grail is reserved for a climax, it would seem that the vessel also must have been associated, in the author's mind, with the Passion, and that a legend must have belonged to it, as well as to the sacred spear. No such legend has been preserved save that related by Robert de Boron; nor is it clear how any one could have been led to think of a dish as the holiest of Christian symbols, had it not been for the identification with the cup of the Eucharist, which was probably the invention of Robert himself. Moreover, the words cited as applicable to the uses of the vessel are terms used by Robert, and possibly borrowed from him. It has above been argued that in all likelihood the poem of Robert succeeded that of Crestien by a very few years. For these reasons I am inclined to regard the story of the continuator as the result of the concordance of ideas borrowed from Robert and Crestien. It is, however, possible that intermediate terms may have existed; the appearance of Crestien's poem was doubtless followed by a flood of speculations regarding the intent of the author, and the manner in which he had designed to continue his narrative; of the mass of literature relating to the subject, only a small portion has survived. In regard to the date of the continuator nothing definite can be stated, saving that his relation to subsequent works of the cycle seems to indicate his time of writing as scarce later than a decade after the predecessor whose work he undertook to carry on.

(2.) *Second continuator.* — The history was taken up by a rhymier as incoherent, but less lively; the name of this poet, who turned his attention to the exploits of Perceval, according to G. Paris, was

probably Gaucher de Dourdan. The result was a tedious narrative in which the ideas of Crestien and his continuator were variously embroidered and expanded. Tales of knights in superb castles waiting to be challenged by sound of horn, champions who fulfil the bidding of their mistresses by defence of dangerous fords, damsels who mourn over slain lovers whom the hero is expected to avenge, are repeated beyond satiety. A great part of the story is occupied by a complicated narration concerning the lady of a castle possessing a self-playing chess-board. Perceval arrives at this castle and plays a game, in which he is mated by the pieces, who move of their own accord; in his disgust he is inclined to throw the board and men into a lake below, but is prevented by the sudden appearance of a fair damsel (who makes a mysterious appearance at the window, standing outside, and in front of the water, line 22,497). Enamoured of this personage, he entreats her favors, and, as a condition of obtaining these, is required to capture the head of a white stag, by the aid of a hound lent for the purpose; the head is obtained, but, together with the hound, carried off by a daughter of the Fisher King, who desires to punish the hero for his failure to make inquiry respecting the Grail. Perceval finds the latter damsel, and requests the return of the stolen property, but is now required to vanquish a knight who has his dwelling in a tomb; while doing battle with this objectionable person, the head and hound are carried off by a brother of the latter. In the sequel Perceval is able to recover the stolen objects and return them to the owner, whose reward he receives. Intercalated is an account of a visit to the mother whom Perceval had deserted: she has passed from earth, but left behind a daughter; from the lips of his sister Perceval is informed of his mother's death. In the end, Perceval a second time reaches the (unnamed) castle of the Fisher King, and (as Gawain in the lines of the first continuator) is required to rejoin the pieces of the sword, a task which he nearly but not quite accomplishes; this partial success causes the host to proclaim his guest as lord of his house; at this point the story, having artfully given a hint of incompleteness, suddenly breaks off (no doubt by intention, the author having undertaken to produce an effect similar to that made by the incomplete tale of Crestien).

The writer has given himself no opportunity to explain his idea of the Grail; but his manner of description, and the epithets he applies are in all respects consonant with the supposition that to him the Grail was known as the sacramental vessel described by Robert de Boron. As in the case of his predecessor, the poet is perfectly ready to contradict the ideas and situations of Crestien, provided he can produce an effect by so doing; he has no hesitation in sacri-

ficing the character of his hero for the sake of disreputable adventures, making him a second time visit his mistress Blancheflor, only for the sake of again abandoning her ; he does not seem to have conceived that the sacred nature of the vessel required any corresponding quality in the hero. Respecting his date, nothing further can be said than that the continuation seems to have been familiar to most of the writers subsequently to be considered.

(3.) *Mennecier*. — Nearly a generation later (about 1220) a third rhymier took up the tale. This author was able to add the names wanting in his predecessors ; he affirmed that the knight at whose funeral Gawain had assisted was Goon Desert, a brother of the Fisher King, slain by a certain Partinial of the Red Tower, nephew of Espinogre, enemy of the Fisher. The stroke is avenged by Perceval, who carries the head of Partinial to the castle of the Fisher-man, and once more witnesses the service of the Grail (the continuator has neglected to notice the mysterious hermit of Crestien's narrative). The Fisher King, learning that Perceval is his nephew, desires to abdicate in his favor ; but the guest refuses to accept such preferment during the lifetime of his host. He returns to Arthur's court, where he remains until the decease of the king, when he is summoned by a damsel and assumes the kingdom. After seven years, informed of the decease of his brother Agloval, he retires to a hermitage, whither he is followed by the Grail, which serves him with food. After ten years more he passes away ; his soul is taken up to heaven, as are Grail, lance, and salver, while his body is interred in the *Palais Aventureux*, and on his stone inscribed : " Here lies Perceval li Galois, who achieved the adventures of the Holy Grail."

It is clear that this writer understood the Grail in the manner in which it is described by Robert ; but the uncertainties of an inaccurate text make it impossible to say whether or not he was acquainted with the Galahad version of the story. It does not seem necessary to argue that his additions to the story are the result of pure invention.

(4.) *Gerbert*. — Of this writer, nearly contemporary with Mennecier, only an abstract has been published, a deficiency probably not to be much regretted. The conclusion is independent of that of Mennecier, but, according to the editor, follows the work of Gaucher. In his second visit to the castle of the Grail, Perceval is unsuccessful and turned away (as Gawain had been). He marries Blancheflor, but a celestial voice bids him preserve his virginity, promising that from his line shall descend a lady who shall be ancestress of the deliverer of the Holy Sepulchre (vol. vi. p. 210; the allusion is to the legend of the Chevalier au Cygne, in which the swan-knight

is made forefather of Godfrey of Bouillon). In a third visit Perceval reunites the pieces of the sword, and in answer to questions is told the story of Joseph of Arimathæa, now explained in conformity with the Galahad romance, obviously familiar to the writer.

The poem thus furnishes an additional example of the freedom used by writers of the cycle; the author has no hesitation in transferring situations from a tale quite different in character.

(5.) *MS. of Berne.* — In a brief but independent ending given in the MS. of Berne, Perceval, in a third visit, names himself to the Fisher King as son of Alain li Gros. The Fisher acknowledges Perceval as his grandson; within three days the king dies, consecrating Perceval as his successor.

(6.) *Prologue.* — An unknown writer thought proper to prefix to Crestien's Perceval an introduction of more than twelve hundred lines. This author was acquainted with three visits of Perceval to the Grail (line 327), and therefore with the sacramental character of the vessel, in accordance with the representations of Robert de Boron; but he furnishes an example of the freedom of these romancers in an account of the vessel totally inconsistent with that of Robert. In ancient times, as he avers, it had been the practice of *puceles* (maidens, *i. e.* fairies) to issue from their mounds bearing refreshment, and carrying wine in cups of gold; King Amangon having violated one of these damsels and carried off her cup, the kingdom became waste, the trees lost their leaves, and the fountains ceased to flow. The cause of the injured damsels was taken up by armed knights, who waged war against Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. One of these cavaliers, Blihos Bliheris, having been captured by Gauvain, was sent prisoner to the court of Arthur, where he remained as a nameless personage. This captive was an excellent story-teller who never bored his hearers:—

Mais si très bons contes savoit
Que nus ne se péüst lasser
De ses paroles escouter.

From this informant the knights of the court learn that their antagonists are descendants of the fairy damsels and their outragers. On acquiring this information, the knights vow a quest in search of the court of the Rich Fisher (thus made one of these fairy mansions); this personage, a famous necromancer, was capable of altering his shape in a hundred ways. The poet is acquainted with seven "branches" of the history of the Grail, in each of which the castle is visited by a different knight; among these divisions he mentions stories of Tristan and Lancelot, and a "conte del ciel," perhaps a version of the tale above mentioned concerning Carahes.

The idea set forth by the writer, that trouble between fairies and

mankind had arisen in consequence of the injustice and ingratitude of individuals who had abused their favors, appears elsewhere. It is possible that the author had found something similar in familiar Arthurian stories ; but the connection of the idea with the Grail is to be considered as his own addition, and only another example of the recklessness with which minstrels used the tales they professed to complete.

PERCEVAL (DIDOT MS.).

Robert de Boron makes the future possessor of the holy vessel to have been an unborn son of Alein, sister's son of Joseph of Arimathæa. The work of Robert may have led to numerous attempts to complete the tale. Of such essays two are extant. The first, a continuation of the story of the Merlin, exists only in the single manuscript indicated.

The tale opens with an account of the manner in which Arthur learns from Merlin that the Round Table has been made in imitation of that of the Last Supper and its copy by Joseph, in which had been left an empty seat symbolical of that occupied by Judas. The early history is related after suggestions contributed by Robert's Joseph of Arimathæa. The possessor of the Grail, the Fisher King, now an old man, cannot be cured of his infirmity until visited by the best of knights, who will put a question regarding the use of the Grail, after which the enchantments of Britain will come to an end. Merlin withdraws to his place in Ortoberlande (*i. e.* Northumberland), where he finds Blaise, confessor of Merlin's mother, whom he informs respecting the events ; it is through the work of Blaise, as we are told, that the history is known. In the next scene we are taken to the home of the dying Alein (the Fisher King), who, at the command of the Holy Ghost, bids his son Perceval seek out his grandfather Bron, father of Alein, who dwells in the isles of Ireland, and who will not die until he has been able to commend the holy vessel to his descendant, who is charged, in the first instance, to repair to the court of Arthur, where he will obtain directions in regard to his future course. At Pentecost, in Carlisle, Arthur holds a tournament, at which Perceval makes his appearance, on the first day taking no conspicuous part ; on the second day he bears arms for the sake of Aleine, niece of Gauvain. Perceval is invited by the king to become one of the household, and in spite of the warnings of Arthur, who mentions the fate of previous occupants of the place, insists on seating himself in the perilous seat left at the Round Table (as recounted in the Merlin). The earth opens, and a celestial voice rebukes the king, declaring that, were it not for the excellence of Perceval's father, the guest would have suffered the fate of that Moys who (as related in the poem of Robert) had suffered for simi-

lar presumption: it is said that the infirmity of the Fisher King cannot be cured until one of the companions of the Round Table shall have accomplished such feats of arms as to merit the title of the best of knights; after such distinction is attained, he shall be conducted to the habitation of the Fisher, who will be healed but pass away, leaving to the new-comer the holy vessel and communicating the secret words taught by Joseph. As a consequence of this revelation, Perceval makes a vow to seek the house of the Fisher King, and his example is followed by the other knights; on the following day they come to a chapel and a cross, where the questers separate, each pursuing his own separate path. The adventures of Perceval are narrated at length, the narrative being in great measure based on that of the second continuator concerning the damsel of the chessboard, the head of the white stag, and the stolen hound, a history repeated with additions and improvements; as in the continuation, the sister of Perceval also figures. With these incidents are interwoven adventures patterned after the poem of Crestien, so that the whole narration forms a curious *mélange* of themes derived from the original work and its sequel. In the end, Perceval arrives at the castle of his grandfather, puts the question, and heals the king. Perceval is informed that the lance is that with which Christ was pierced, and that the Grail contained the holy blood collected by Joseph of Arimathæa. A voice from heaven informs Bron that within three days he will depart from earth, after having informed his successor respecting the secret words; angels carry the soul of the king to heaven, and the enchantments of Britain are at an end. At the same time is heard at the Round Table a crash of thunder. Merlin conducts Perceval to Blaise, declaring that his own labors are at an end. A conclusion carries on the history of Arthur until the time of his departure for Avalon, the story being related by Merlin, who declares that he himself can neither die nor henceforth freely move in the world, and who returns to a place of concealment in the forest.

This romance has been regarded as composed by Robert de Boron, and as forming the third member of a trilogy, of which the Joseph of Arimathæa and the Merlin were the earlier divisions. Such seems still to be the opinion of G. Paris ("Littérature française au moyen âge," p. 99); but he offers no argument in defence of this position. Supposing the doubts before offered concerning Robert's authorship of the Merlin to obtain acceptance, the supposition falls to the ground. Independently of such view, there are reasons for presuming that the writer of the tale was not identical with the authors of the two other treatises. In favor of such opinion no good ground has been given. Robert makes his romance

depend on a pretended Latin original written by Joseph himself; the writer of the *Perceval* would have his readers believe that a work of Blaise was his authority. The difference of style and conception appears to me so total as to exclude common authorship; the *Perceval* is ultra-romantic, as the *Merlin* is pseudo-historical, and the *Joseph* legendary. According to the *Merlin*, the perilous seat is not to be filled until the achievement of the adventure of the Grail; in the *Perceval*, the place is taken before anything is heard of the Grail, and no further mention is made of the empty place. As the number of banqueters at the Round Table the *Merlin* names fifty knights, the *Perceval* twelve peers, and afterwards thirty knights. Such variation has the appearance of one of those contradictions which, as before observed, continuators, in their reckless desire for originality, were in the habit of introducing. Finally, the father of the hero is named, not Alein, as in the poem of Robert, but Alein li Gros, as in the prose recast of Robert. Again, if the work had really been composed by the same hand as the *Merlin*, it could scarcely have been so neglected as to appear only in a single manuscript.

PELLESVAUS.

There is extant another long prose romance, in which *Perceval* is represented as a son of Alein li Gros; this person is now spoken of as lord of the Vales of Camelot (in the MSS. the name is misspelled as Vilein or Julien). Instead of Bron, another name is assigned to the grandfather of *Perceval*, whose mother is a cousin of Lancelot; but the relation of the hero to Joseph of Arimathæa is the same as in the poem of Robert. The writer amused himself with capriciously altering the name *Perceval*, spelling it, in accordance with fantastic derivations, as *Perlesvaus* (expounded as a name indicating the loss of the Vales), or *Par-lui-fet* (self-made): the form *Perceval* is, however, usual; in a subscription the name is spelled *Pellesvaus*.

In this tale no mention is made of an empty seat at the Round Table. In the court of Arthur at Carlisle appear three damsels, who arrive in a car drawn by white stags, and bring from the Fisher King a red-cross shield, once the property of Joseph of Arimathæa, hereafter to be used by the destined hero who will accomplish the adventure of the Grail; the proper person will be known by his own shield, which will exhibit a white stag on a red ground, as well as by the reception of a pet hound left for the purpose. The first visit of *Perceval* to the Grail is not expressly related, but he is represented as sick in consequence of his failure. *Perceval* relieves the Chastel de Puceles from the attack of a wicked uncle of his own, the king of the Chastel Mortel. This person, the villain of the drama, persecutes the mother of *Perceval*, who is dwelling at Came-

lot, and her daughter goes to Arthur's court in search of a champion. At this time Perceval himself arrives in a galley managed by a white-haired old man, takes the shield of Joseph, and departs before his sister can come to speech with him. Lancelot and Gawain go in quest of the hero. The sister, however, fortunately meets Perceval, and informs him of his mother's situation; he sets out for Camelot, while the sister goes to a cemetery, whither it is necessary for her to proceed in order to obtain a cloth from the altar. At the entrance of Camelot she overtakes her brother, and the three surviving members of the family are reunited. Perceval departs on adventures, in the course of which he visits his uncle, the Hermit King; certain of his experiences are allegorically explained. Meantime, after the death of the Fisher King, Perceval's wicked uncle has usurped the castle of the Quest, where, in an adjoining chapel, the Grail is wont to appear, and has paganized the place. Perceval, with twelve hermits, undertakes an expedition and storms the castle, while the uncle kills himself. Perceval is now led to undertake a remarkable voyage, in the course of which he touches at various islands. In one of these isles he sees men of remarkable whiteness. By a chain a golden crown is lowered from heaven, and Perceval is made to promise that, when a vessel having a red-cross sail shall appear to take him, he will revisit the isle and take the crown. In another island is living an uncle's wife of the hero, who needs his help; and in still another he finds the tombs of his own ancestors. He returns to the castle of the Quest, where he reigns with his sister and mother; after these pass away, the ship with the red-cross sail arrives, in which Perceval departs, never more to be seen by human eyes. The Grail vanishes from the chapel, which is still in existence; two knights of Wales who visit the chapel become hermits, and never mention the things they have seen. The narrative is attributed to Joseph of Arimathea himself, who is said to have written it in Latin. It has been preserved in the archives of a holy house in the isle of Avalon (presumably Glastonbury). With the story of the main hero are interwoven adventures of Gawain and Lancelot. The former, as a condition of admission to the castle of the Fisher King, is required to fetch the sword with which John the Baptist had been beheaded; the knight, however, is unsuccessful in his second visit. Lancelot, on account of his unrepented sin with the queen, is unable to obtain sight of the Grail. It is a peculiar situation of the romance that Arthur's queen is made to die in consequence of grief for the loss of her son Lohot. The Scottish wars of Arthur are inserted. There is no love story; Perceval is known as the Good Knight, or the Chaste Knight, and the Grail receives the title of Most Holy (*seintime*).

In this romance the most wildly extravagant adventures are narrated in the most prosaic style. Such quality seems characteristic of a relatively late tale, and the fiction has usually been so regarded. On the other hand, many similar situations reappear in the Galahad romance, while the present story seems to exhibit a simpler and earlier type of these incidents. Such considerations, presumably, have led G. Paris to regard the narrative as forming part of the material used by the makers of the Galahad tales. These two positions are not contradictory, for there is every probability that the form in which the romance is extant is not that in which it was originally composed. Independently of this consideration, there is no reason to suppose that we possess more than a small part of the mass of romances relating to the Grail, constructed at the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century, with Perceval for a hero; and it may well be that ideas corresponding to those noted floated freely in these fictions.

Particularly significant is the story respecting the voyages of Perceval; comparison makes it clear that the account is modelled after the famous voyage of St. Brandan. On the other hand, the Galahad romances exhibit very much altered and more marvellous accounts of journeys by sea. In this part of the story, therefore, we seem to obtain a glimpse of the manner in which contemporary literary material was worked up into the Grail romances, and an illustration of the extreme rapidity with which unrestrained fancy elaborated simple accounts into the wildest fiction.

NOTES.

Continuators of Crestien. See G. Paris, *Hist. litt. de la France*, vol. xxx. pp. 27, 28. (Explanations announced as to be printed in *Romania* have not yet appeared.) H. Waitz, *Die Fortsetzungen von Chrestien's Perceval le Gallois*, Strassburg, 1890. Continuations in the edition of Potvin occupy (1) lines 10,601-21,916, but lines 12,395-15,164 are interpolated: Waitz, p. 5. (2) Lines 21,917-34,934. (3) Lines 34,935-45,379: epilogue, vol. v. pp. 157, 158. In the third continuator the passage containing the history of Joseph of Arimathæa, after the Galahad story, lines 34,991-35,128 seems interpolated: Waitz, pp. 12-14. It would, therefore, appear likely that the same is the case with the name Corbiere (variant of Corbenic, the Grail castle). But the name of the Palais Aventureus, line 45,365, where Perceval is interred, also seems reminiscent of that at Sarra in the Galahad story. Whether Mennecier used a romance of the Galahad type may be left for a critical editor to decide. The ending of MS. of Berne is given by A. Rochat, *Über einen bisher unbekannten Percheval li Galois*, Zürich, 1855, p. 90; Prologue in Potvin, lines 1-1282.

Perceval (Didot MS.). In E. Hucher, *Le Saint-Graal*, 1875, vol. i. pp. 415-505.

Pellesvaus. In Potvin, vol. i. pp. 1-352.

Relation of the Perceval of Crestien to later romances of the cycle. The doctrine set forth in these pages, that stories treating of the Grail depend exclusively on the poem of Crestien, will receive confirmation from an examination of the

manner in which passages of the poem have been expanded into long and contradictory narrations. As examples of this process may be cited the following developments: (1) *Misinterpretation of pronouns*. In line 7789 the pronoun *cil* has reference to the father of the Roi Pescéour, not to that personage; the contrary supposition has caused Perceval's host to be set down as his uncle instead of his cousin (so in Nutt's abstract). In line 4749 *cil* refers to Perceval, not to the cousin; the reverse supposition causes Wolfram to represent the hero as ignorant of his own proper name. On this account the address of Perceval's mother to her son as *beau fils*, line 1567, is understood by Wolfram as meaning that this was the only appellation of the boy (compare the prologue in Potvin, line 1234), — an idea remote from the mind of Crestien. (2) *The Adventures of Britain*. In line 2449 the idiot who has been injured by the seneschal assures the king that the latter is to encounter perilous adventures: in this prediction the poet only intended to include the experiences recounted in connection with the appearance of Perceval; but the phrase was understood by later romancers as signifying the Quest of the Grail and its dangers, commonly spoken of as the Adventures of Britain, or the Enchantments of Britain. (3) *The bleeding lance*. In Crestien's tale this weapon has nothing to do with the wounds of the Fisher King, which are said to have happened in a battle in which he had been hurt by a javelin, line 4691. The current French explanation came to be that the spear was that with which Christ had been wounded; but the weapon is connected with the wound of the Fisher King in lines which have been celebrated, but seem to be interpolated, 7542-45, where it is stated that the kingdom of Logres had been or would ultimately be (the form *ert* is ambiguous) ruined by this lance. (4) *The Sword with the Strange Hangings*. The Fisher King presents Perceval, a stranger in his house, with a sword of which the hangings are precious (lines 4337-38. *Celui ki laiens ert estranges, De ceste espée par les ranges*). In line 6090 is mentioned a totally different weapon, as the Sword with Strange Hangings (*L'espée as estranges ranges*). Confusion led to the supposition that this latter weapon was connected with the story of the Grail. According to Crestien, the sword is to break at the first blow, and must be welded by its maker, Trebucet. The first continuator uses and perverts the idea, making the weapon break in a mysterious encounter, in which falls a knight by whose loss the kingdom of Logres is said to be ruined (as above noted, an interpolator applied this description to the lance). The continuator did not furnish a name for this slain knight. Mennequier knows that he was called Goon Desert. The Queste considers the sword to have belonged to King David, and mentions its fracture in a strife between Lambar, one of the Fisher Kings, and a warrior named Urlain. A continuator of the Merlin is acquainted with another dolorous blow in which has figured the weapon of a two-sworded knight; this brand, brought from Avalon, becomes a possession insuring the ruin of its owner, having figured in the combat of two brothers, Balaain and Balaan (Malory has inserted the story); with this sword Lancelot will slay his dearest friend Gawain. Again, the fortunes of a two-sworded knight are divergently recounted in the *Chevalier aux deux espées*. In this manner a few lines of the master serve as the seed, whence rise branch and entwine a whole library of fiction.

The Second Continuator and Robert de Boron. The lines of the continuator (as printed by Potvin): *li Gréaus — Que tant est biaux et présius — ũ est li clers sans gloriours — Del Roi des rois* (28072-75), seem to me obviously a paraphrase of the words of Robert: *Devant ce reissel précieux — Où est rostres sans gloriours* (2452-53). So the idea of Gaucher, that the Grail protects him that sees it against the wiles of the Devil during that day (28,078-81) seems borrowed from Robert's similar statement (3061-76).

W. W. Newell.